naturekenya.org April '07

NatureKenya
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Stout Cisticola by Peter Usher

Bird Identification with Brian Finch

Wednesday 4 April at 1pm (after the morning birdwalk) at the Louis Leakey Hall, Nairobi Museum

Learn from renowned ornithologist, naturalist and professional bird guide Brian Finch. He will talk on the indentification of difficult species.

Refreshments will be provided

Driver ants

A talk by Dr Caspar Schöning

Dorylus molestus by April Nobile
www.antweb.org

Tues 24 April, 4:00 p.m.
at the Louis Leakey Hall, National Museums, Nairobi

A short illustrated talk followed by the BBC Natural History film "Ant attack" which shows the life and migration of a driver ant colony.

Dr Schoning is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen and works on the systematic and ecology of African driver ants. He also participated in the production of the film.

RECEIVED 22 MAR 2007

Annual General Meeting

of the East Africa Natural History Society

Tuesday 8 May, 4:00 p.m. at the Louis Leakey Hall, National Museums, Nairobi

Don't miss this most talked-about film to feature immediately after the AGM

An Inconvenient truth

Former Vice President of the United States Al Gore, in a persuasive argument on global warming.
A Davis Guggenheim production

Bring a friend!

APRIL AT A GLIMPSE

WED 4	BIRD ID WITH BRIAN FINCH
THU 5	SAMAKI OUTING
SAT 14	TREE WALK
SUN 15	SUNDAY BIRDWALK
TUE 24	DRIVER ANTS TALK
MON 30	TREE WALK

BIRDWALKS EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING
BIRD RINGING EVERY THURSDAY MORNING

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Kakamega Forest birding trip
Fri 19 - Mon 23 October

Members of Birdlife International Partners from other countries will be in Kenya in October for a meeting and will be going on a bird safari to Kakamega Forest. Join them and visit Hippo Point shore line of Lake Victoria, Dunga Swamp & Kakamega Forest.

Cost: Ksh 49650/- pp sharing inclusive of one way flight to Kisumu, BB at Kiboko Bay resort, FB at Rondo Retreat, road transport, and guide fees.
Book now, 2 spaces left! by 30th May 07.
For more information contact Nature Kenya office Tel: 3746090/9957

Editorial Team

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Library closes in April 07 at Easter for relocation to new permanent premises. This will take a few months - watch this space for opening dates!

action

Kenya's new land policy

Kenya's draft National Land Policy was published in December 2006. Download a copy ot www.ardhi.go.ke Nature Kenya has submitted comments on this draft, which largely left out biodiversity conservation as a form of land use.

Nature Kenya goes to court

The Amboseli case came for mention on February 27th at the High Court, where the full heoring was postponed from March 14 as indicated previously, to May 27 2007.

*****Nature Kenya wins the Society for Conservation Biology Distinguished Service & Laroe Award 2007

SCB hos honored six individuols and organizations for their outstonding contributions to odvoncing the science and practice of conserving Eorth's biological diversity. Recipients of the 2007 owords were nominoted by members of SCB, selected by the Awards Committee, and approved by the Boord of Governors. The owords will be presented on 4 July during the 2007 onnuol meeting in Port Elizabeth, South Africo.
For more on SCB go to www.conbio.org

The Evening Sky March 2007

Ian Mackay and Fleur Ng'weno

Moon phases, April 2007

2nd - Full moon;
10th - Last quarter;
17th - New moon;
24th - First quarter

Moon distances from the earth in April 2007

3rd - apogee - (far);
17th - perigee - (close);
30th - apogee - (far)

Moon position near bright stars and planets in April 2007

3rd - Spica (in Virgo) NW of moon;
7th - Antares (in Scorpius) N of moon;
8th - Jupiter N of moon;
14th - Mars S of moon;
16th - Mercury S of moon;
20th - Venus S of moon;
25th - Saturn S of moon;
26th - Regulus (in Leo) S of moon;
30th - Spica N of moon;

Planets, approximate magnitudes

Magnitude is a measure of brightness. The lower the number, the brighter the planet!

Mercury = 0.0 to -2.0
Venus = -4.0
Mars = 1.1
Jupiter = -2.3 to -2.6
Saturn = 0.2
Uranus = 5.9
Neptune = 7.9

Planets are usuolly listed in order of their distonce from the sun, so Mercury is first. Venus, at mognitude minus 4, is the brightest. Uranus and Nepture are far from the sun, and telescopes are usually needed to see them.

Stars and planets

Venus is brilliant in the early evening over the sunset. The constellation of Orion is storting to set in the west. Sirius, the brightest star we see at night, is high in the southwest; and Canopus, the second brightest star, is below Sirius in the south.

Saturn looks like a bright yellow star, high in the east. It is near the constellation of Leo, the lion. A curving line of stars forms the lion's head. Other stars mark the body of a resting lion, with the star Regulus in the front. Between Saturn and Sirius is the bright star Procyon.

Jupiter rises later in the evening, and is still high in the sky in the eorly morning before dawn. Jupiter is bright and becomes brighter towards the end of April. Mars and Mercury ore also in the morning sky. Mercury is relatively bright and in good view in the first half of April.

Have you seen this Vulture?

A number of vultures in the Maro and Serengeti are tagged. If you see one, pleose note the number, dote, time, and location (by GPS or nearest landmark). Kindly e-moil informotion to ony of the following oddresses:

tanzaniobirds@yahoogroups.com
pkirui@mitsuminet.com mkoikoi@hotmail.com
tpf@africoonline.co.ke

Play a part for the Mara-Serengeti... report tagged vultures.

Vultures play an important role by feeding on wildebeest and zebra that die during their migration. It is estimated that vultures (not lions and hyenas) consume nearly 70% of the dead animals in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem.

If vultures disappeared from the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, the sights and smells of rotting animal carcasses would turn away millions of visitors, denying Kenya and Tanzania revenue.

Vulture populations are fast disappearing in Africa. In South Asia and parts of West Africa, populations have declined by as much as 98 percent over the last decade. They face poisoning, habitat loss and persecution.

The Vulture Project is aimed at improving our knowledge about vulture ecology so that conservation interventions are based on sound scientific principles.

THE VULTURE PROJECT

THE PEREGRINE FUND
www.peregrinefund.org

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Remembering Nature Kenya in your long term planning or in your will can help sites and species for generations to come.

Rain Locusts

Dino Martins

February 26, 2007

Dear Dr. Irvine

Yaur specimen is a locust, which tagether with the crickets and grasshappers are in the insect Order Orthoptera. It is part of a fairly large and diverse graup of locusts known as 'Rain Locusts' falling within the Family Pamphagidae. These are typical inhabitants af most East African bush, rocky areas and savannah edges. They tend to be large, like the one that yau collected. From a cursory inspection, and I emphasize that I am not a locust taxonomist, it laaks like a member of the genus Lamarckiana.

As you nated, the locust was singing. This behaviour is typical of locusts and crickets. It is typically only the males that 'sing' – actually they are stridulating by rubbing their legs against their wings. This is done to attract females and males can sing far haurs on end to win a lady-locust's heart. As to the similarity ta the call of the nightjar, this is a really interesting observation. It may be that the nightjars mimic these calls sa as to lure unsuspecting insects and gabble them up. Hawever, as you prabably knaw, the range af sound that humans can hear is limited and there may be parts af the calls of both species that are gaing undetected ta the human ear.

Thank yau for sending yaur observatian to the Insect Cammittee and I hope that this response is of some help.

Send your inquiries on insects and pallinatars ta dino.martins@gmail.cam

Kenya Herpetofauna Working Group (KHWG)

Amphibian observation form

Frogs and toads are seasanal vertebrates breeding at the anset af the rainy season. They breed in poals of water, ranging from roadside puddles to swamps, lakes and rivers. However most af these breeding areas are threatened as habitats are altered. Pesticides and ather agricultural chemicals alsa find their ways into these water badies, leading to amphibian deaths or limb malfarmatians.

The KHWG wauld like yau ta assist them by reporting any breeding, dead ar malfarmed frogs and taads in yaur surraundings. Your information will be useful in aur efforts in conserving amphibians.

Request a monitoring form from office@naturekenya.org or cbd@museums.or.ke

For more Chris Madden cartoons buy his book "The Beast that ate the Earth" from his website www.chrismadden.org

Binoculars available at the AGM

Buy a pair of top quality 8 X 40 binoculars by Viking optics at 16400/- Only 3 pairs available

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KINANGOP GUEST HOUSE

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks on the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya. Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

MEMBER nos	Overnight	Weekend
1 to 2 pax	4000/-	6500/-
3 pax	4,900/-	7,400/-
4 pax	5,800/-	8,300/-

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On presentation of your membership card, you can get this discount off accommodation (if paying by cash or cheque) at the Driftwood Beachclub. This is a charming beachfront property with great food and service. Contact: gm@driftwoodclub.com or tel 042 20155

BIRDWALKS

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park near Langi Langi cafe, every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park near Langi Langi cafe at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 15 APR. '07.** The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

KINANGOP BIRDING

Friends of Kinangop Plateau organise birdwalks every third Friday of the month i.e. **20 APR. 07** at 9:00 a.m around Magumu and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

FFJ BIRDWALK (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **21 APR. '07.** Please call Marlene Reid on 2491648 or 0720 949195 to confirm

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (Coast)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **7 APR. '07, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

LAKE VICTORIA SUNSET BIRDERS (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

MT KENYA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GROUP (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month i.e. **28 APR.'07.**

For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.co.uk

MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A community group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday i.e. **28 APR. '07.** Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

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TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. 14 and **30 APR 07** from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

NGONG ROAD FOREST WALKS

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust nature walks held the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **7 & 21 APR '07, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Ignatius ;to confirm on 3875207 or 0720 976299.

SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. **5 APR '07** from 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival